



*Tracy Lynn Atkinson
Municipality of West Grey
The Town of Hanover*

Stepping into Spring

As we enter the final months of the 2021-22 school year, it is important to recognize all that we have accomplished in our education system over the past several months. Through the gradual easing of COVID-19 restrictions and return of certain activities that had been temporarily paused, school life is feeling more as it did prior to the pandemic. Credit goes to our students, staff, families, and partners, whose collaborative team spirit and willingness to compromise and stay the course have kept our schools and work sites safe and moving in a positive direction.

Spring is always an active time for future planning. Kindergarten registration and Grade 8 secondary transition activities are underway in elementary schools, while secondary schools have been busy with student senator elections, graduation plans, and career pathway exploration. Meanwhile at the system level, trustees are engaged in budget discussions to align next year's spending with our strategic priorities. It has been another school year of enduring the unpredictable. Though as we navigate the bumpy road out of the pandemic, we face forward from a renewed position of strength and hope.

2022-23 Budget

Trustees are working through the 2022-23 budget process. A public budget consultation survey was conducted in February to gather feedback from students, parents/guardians, staff, and other stakeholders in assisting trustees to identify priorities for the efficient, effective, and equitable use of board resources during the next school year. According to the [survey results](#), educational programs and services that rank highest in priority include 'reading and writing skills', followed by 'mental health and well-being', 'math learning', and 'technological education'. [Click here to learn more about the 2022-23 budget.](#) Trustees thank those who shared their thoughts through the survey.

Contact Me

As always, please feel free to contact me with your questions or concerns:

519-369-7638

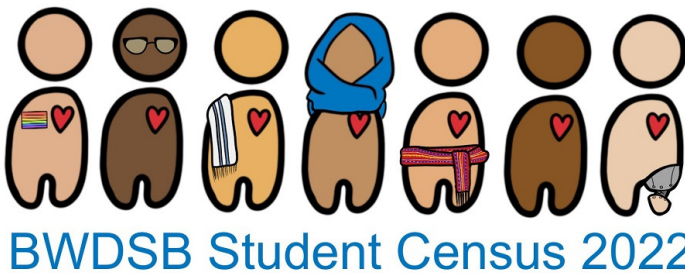
tracy-lynn_atkinson@bwdsb.on.ca

Student Demographic Census

From April 19 to May 6, 2022, all junior kindergarten to Grade 12 students are invited to participate in [Student Demographic Census 2022 - "Your Voice Matters!"](#) While participation is voluntary, we strongly encourage students to get involved by completing the questionnaire, which will help Bluewater District School Board to:

- better understand student needs
- eliminate barriers to student success and well-being
- support programs and provide resources for students and families

Your Voice Matters!



Congratulations to Peninsula Shores District School Grade 11 student Molly Solomon for her winning census logo design, and Egremont Community School Grade 5 student Emerson Lantz for submitting the chosen slogan in our board wide contest.

New Child Care Spaces

Bluewater District School Board joined MPP Bill Walker, upper and lower tier municipal partners, child care representatives, and media for a [virtual announcement](#) on January 27, 2022 regarding the Ontario government's investment of \$600,000 to create 39 child care spaces at St. Edmunds Public School in Tobermory. Funded through the province's Early Years Capital Program, the project will include one toddler room and one preschool room to support families on the Bruce Peninsula.



Capital Priorities Update

Business cases were submitted last year through the Ministry of Education's 2021-22 Capital Priorities Program for replacement elementary schools in Dundalk (JK-8 with child care spaces), Kincardine (JK-6 with child care spaces), and Owen Sound (Hillcrest Elementary School, JK-8). Though these business cases were not approved for 2021-22, our board recently resubmitted through the 2022-23 Capital Priorities Program the replacement elementary school cases for Dundalk and Kincardine. An 'Approval To Proceed' has also been submitted to the ministry for a scope change to increase the number of student spaces from 236 to 328 when building a replacement for Beavercrest Community School.

Secondary Laptop Investment

To further support online learning, a greater need for technology among families, and new secondary online credit requirements, Bluewater District School Board recently announced a [1:1 laptop allocation investment](#) for all Grades 9 to 12 students. In February, current Grades 9 to 11 students were provided with individual laptops to support their learning. The next phase of distribution is slated for this September when each incoming Grade 9 student will receive a laptop to coincide with their entry into secondary school.



Important Links and Resources

Return to School

Access the daily COVID-19 screening link for students and staff, our three-part Q and A, and other health and safety information. [Click here.](#)

COVID-19 Updates

View the latest updates and advisories related to the impact of COVID-19 on our schools and worksites. [Click here.](#)

Mental Health and Well-Being

Resources for students and families from Bluewater District School Board's mental health partners, a [self-referral link](#) for students to access support from our board's mental health team, and a variety of other related items are available [here](#).



Kindergarten Registration

For parents/guardians whose children are entering school for the first time in September 2022, follow this easy [three-step registration process](#).

Secondary Transitions

Current Grade 8 students who will be entering secondary school next year can learn all about the many program options that will soon be available to them. Our [Secondary Transitions web page](#) features individual profiles for all nine of our Bluewater District School Board secondary schools, course calendars and other program materials, videos on secondary transitioning, and virtual school tours.



Visit our website: www.bwdsb.on.ca

Find Bluewater District School Board on social media:



Download our free mobile app:



Celebrating Pink Shirt Day

Students and staff in Bluewater District School Board honoured a popular annual tradition on February 23, 2022 with the celebration of Pink Shirt Day. This year's theme of "Lift Each Other Up" provided an opportunity for participants to sport their most vibrant pink clothing fashions, adorn classrooms and hallways with pink art and positive messaging, and organize a variety of activities aimed at raising anti-bullying awareness and promoting accepting and inclusive learning environments. Pink Shirt Day is one of several initiatives held throughout the year in Bluewater District School Board to actualize our strategic priority of ensuring a safe supportive learning community that works together to support wellness, and fosters the strengths, contributions, and overall health of students and staff.



Staff members from Bluewater District School Board's Mental Health Team share a message of kindness during Pink Shirt Day 2022. The team is always available to support students and works hard to destigmatize issues surrounding mental health.